

not done their homework. They have done an enormous disservice to their members, in my judgment. And I will say that to them directly when they come to see me about this farm bill. They have done an enormous disservice by telling people money is available, don't worry about it, when, with absolute assurance, we can see the money is not going to be available in the same amount that is available in this year's budget.

Mr. DAYTON. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. CONRAD. Yes.

Mr. DAYTON. If I understand the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee correctly, in this body, the Senate, we have to pass a farm bill this year. Then do we also have to have it conferenced and sent to the President in this calendar year as well, in order to protect these funds?

Mr. CONRAD. We do. The hard reality is this, in my judgment. In the budget resolution, those funds are available to us until the next budget resolution is passed. But there is another thing that is going to happen. In January of next year a new economic assessment is going to be made by the Congressional Budget Office, by the Office of Management and Budget, and it is going to show significant deterioration. That is going to change the dynamics very significantly, and that is going to make the ability to use this money in this budget resolution now to write a new farm bill much less real next year.

So nobody should be under any illusions. A lot is at stake for agriculture. This is not agriculture somehow separate and distinct from the rest of the economy because we know agriculture plays a key role, right at the heart of this economy. We know if agriculture is hurting, Main Street businesses are hurting. Certainly that is true in our State. Certainly that is true in the State of the distinguished Chair.

The irony is, right at the time we are considering writing a stimulus package for the national economy, we are getting advice to forget about writing a strong farm bill this year when we know the money that is available now will not be available next year. That is reality.

For these farm groups to write to our leadership and say to them, don't worry about it, we have assurances that the resources necessary to fund a farm bill that is above the baseline will be there next year, they have completely bought a pig in a poke.

I hope the members of these organizations will call their associations and ask them: What are you doing? What kind of advice are you giving down there? It is not advice that is good for the people you represent. This may be good advice for the administration. This may be the advice the administration wants to give. Why are they signing up for that? Why are they endorsing the administration's position when the administration is taking the posi-

tion that is totally counter to what is good for not only I believe the farmers of America but for the national economy?

One of the things the economists have been telling us about the stimulus package is that one of the most effective things you can do is get money into the agricultural sector because, No. 1, that money gets out quickly to the farmers and, No. 2, because there is such economic hard times for farmers.

We have the lowest farm prices in real terms in 50 years. That makes farmers have a greater dispensation to spend the money that is part of the farm program.

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, the Senator and I share a common border. I know our farmers are in a similar predicament. These dollars are going to be central to the survival of farmers in Minnesota, and I dare say in North Dakota as well.

It seems to me that somebody is playing a very dangerous game with literally the lives and the livelihoods of a lot of farmers in my home State of Minnesota, and I expect others as well. It makes me wonder who is looking out for whom here. How could it be there are those who are so active in trying to postpone action on a bill with the result being that farmers are going to receive less money. It will take longer one way or the other.

The bottom line, from what I hear from the Senator from North Dakota on the Budget Committee, is that they may be out of money entirely if we don't act this calendar year.

Mr. CONRAD. I believe these groups have been flimflammed. I do not know a nice way to say it. I don't think they understand how the budget process works—for them to be realigned on the representation from the administration about money that is going to be available in the next budget resolution. The administration doesn't have any role in writing the next budget resolution. That is written in the House of Representatives and the Senate. The administration has absolutely nothing to do with writing the budget resolution. That is what makes the resources available next year. Just a little bit of commonsense analysis would tell you that the same amount of money is not going to be available next year. Receipts are going down. Expenses are going up. That means there will be less money available.

When a budget resolution is written next year, there will not be anywhere close to this amount of money available for writing a farm bill. That puts all of the people who we represent in jeopardy. That puts their financial lives on the line.

For the farm organizations that are supposed to represent these very people to send up a letter such as this tells me one of two things: No. 1, either they have been totally hoodwinked about the budget circumstances we face next year, or, No. 2, they aren't thinking very carefully about who they have a

responsibility to represent. No. 3, perhaps they have just not done their homework and don't know the circumstances that we will be facing.

Mr. DAYTON. I know the time under the previous order is about to expire. I thank the Senator from North Dakota for sounding this alarm. I was not aware of this situation. I thank the Senator for making it very clear to the Members of the Senate and to farmers throughout this country what is at stake. My hope is that our colleagues will join with us in insisting that we have a farm bill passed so we don't leave our farmers back home seriously in the lurch.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Senator from our neighboring State, who is a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Already, just in the first months of his term, he has demonstrated a real commitment to family farmers, and also to an understanding of the budget process. I wish that same understanding had been evidenced by these farm organizations that sent this advice to the leadership that could be so very harmful to the very people they seek to represent.

I conclude by saying to my colleagues that we need to write the farm bill now. We need to use the money that is in the budget resolution now. No one should be under any illusion that this money is going to be available next year. Most assuredly it is not.

Let's be crystal clear about what is at stake; that is, the economic lives of tens of thousands of farm families.

FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2506) making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes.

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill which had been reported from the Committee on Appropriations, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

That the following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes, namely:

TITLE I—EXPORT AND INVESTMENT ASSISTANCE

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES

The Export-Import Bank of the United States is authorized to make such expenditures within the limits of funds and borrowing authority available to such corporation, and in accordance with law, and to make such contracts and commitments without regard to fiscal year limitations, as provided by section 104 of the Government Corporation Control Act, as may be necessary in carrying out the program for the current fiscal year for such corporation: Provided, That none of the funds available during